4720

NEW METHOD FOR THE HARP

(SKETCH)

E. PARISH ALVARS

AUTOGRAPH

RCM MS 4720.

New Method for the Harp

(Parish Alvars' M.S.)

Rcm 4720

1st Plate Single movement —
2 — Do Double movement
3, Do Manner of sitting
4, Ditto Position of right hand
5 — Ditto Position of left hand —
6 — Do for harmonics right hand
7 — Do for do left hand
8 — Do for

Plates

Table of Contents

1, — general description of the single & double action Harp
1, 1st Scales
2, Shakes
3, Octaves
4, Slides or Sdrucciolando
5, Pedals
6, Synonymes
7, Harmonics
8, ~~Etouffés~~
9, Different passages that may be produced by [illegible]
10, Chapter for [illegible] all effects by ♯ & ♭
11, C♮ · G♮, D♮ do not exist double
13, Observations on the left hand
14, Playing with accompaniments, passing the pedals in the strong and weak part of the bar
15, On striking accords of 2 octaves and other broad accords
16 — Swell Pedal and its use
17 — Position of Body and Arms [illegible]
20, Accords — brisés et Plaqué
21, Tuning and stringing the Harp
22, chromatic scale on one string [illegible] passing the sounding [illegible] with key on sounding board and other effects

[illegible] of one or Power [illegible]
two only, viz. the Harp and Piano-forte, enable the Performer to unite Harmony with Melody. On either of these a Performer can accompany the voice with chords, and give a just idea from the score, of the merit of a Dramatic Composition. This valuable advantage insures the Harp and Piano-forte a pre-eminence over any other Musical Instrument. Considered in this point of view they are certainly the most complete, notwithstanding their want of sustaining or swelling the sounds.

Two distinct branches of Instruction must be combined to form a great Instrumental Performer. The first consists of a knowledge of the general Principles of music, with which it is absolutely necessary to be conversant to play well on any Instrument; the object of the second branch is the Mechanism peculiar to the Instrument which the pupil is intended to play on. Most of the Instruction Books, in attempting to explain these two branches at once, have missed their aim; for by carrying on two Works instead of one, each, for want of proper extension has generally been incomplete, so that the pupil has hitherto been but superficially acquainted with both, which he would have understood much better had he studied them separately. Impressed with these considerations, the author has not inserted in this Method any of the principles relating to the general study of music, but has confined himself to those which relate to the requisites necessary for playing well on the Harp. He therefore supposes (as is generally the case) that the pupil attempting the study of that Instrument is already conversant with the Rudiments of music.

The Harp

(praise it)

The Harp is an Instrument of the greatest antiquity.

[illegible]

1) the Harp player [illegible]
accompaniment, as the necessity of using the pedals [illegible] placing them in the strong & weak parts of the bar, [illegible] easily draw the attention from the time —

2) A constant Practice of the Scales — ~~Smucciolando~~ — shakes — octaves — and slides (Smucciolandi) are indispensable as they form the fundament or ground work of a perfect and finished execution on the Harp 3

3) The object of the Author, in writing this ~~work~~ (Method) has been to develop, state and explain everything, essential, to the mechanism of the Instrument and the exercises necessary to surmount every difficulty inherent to the Harp — this being the sole aim of the author, he has ~~[illegible]~~ not inserted any rudiments of music, supposing the pupil to be already conversant ~~and has pursued only his principal object [illegible] explain this more clearly~~ with them —

4 — The octaves with right hand 2d finger

5 — the fingering is with a few exceptions the same for both hands. The Left Hand position requires some passages to be fingered differently

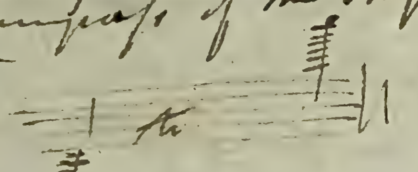
6 — Write something in the Preface in praise of the Harp — its antiquity Instrument of Poetry &c &c

Chapter upon the single Movement Harp —

~~The Double movement Harp notwithstanding its Manifold advantages is not yet universally~~ In order to render this Method of general utility deems it necessary to dedicate a Chapter exclusively to the Common or Single movement Harp ~~forte~~ for 2 Reasons 1st Many Persons, ~~especially on~~ ~~do~~ have only a single movement Harp at their command — and 2ndly it is necessary for those who possess and study a Double Movement should be acquainted with the mechanism and resources of the Simple movement. The plates ~~annexed~~ marked the frontispiece show the Mechanism of the single and Double action Harps —

~~The single movement Harp is tuned in E flat~~

The compass of the single movement Harp is generally six octaves.

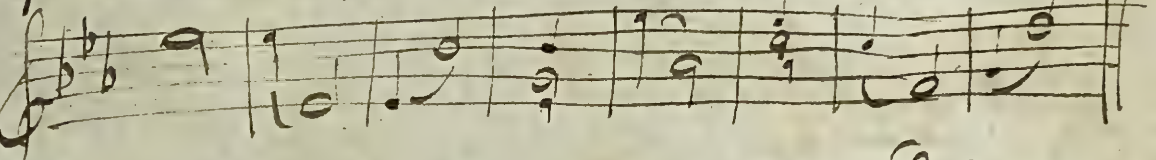
Viz 

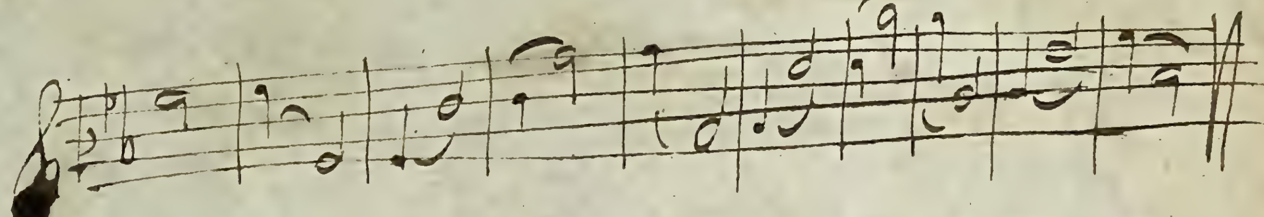
The strings are of catgut — the eight lowest are of silk covered with Silver wire — to facilitate the execution the F's are ~~blue~~ coloured blue and the C's red —

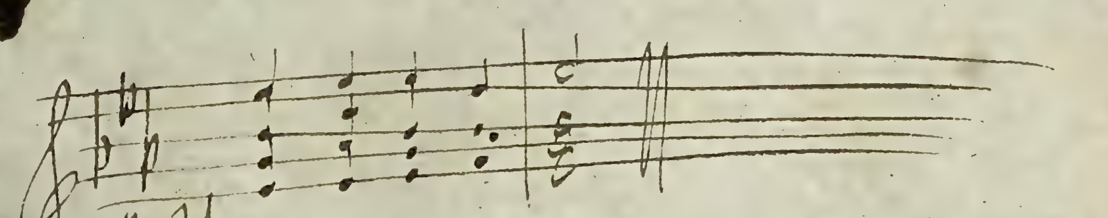
On the common Harp ~~as on the Double~~ there are seven pedals by means of which their respective notes can be raised a ~~tone~~ semitone — thus the C pedal ~~being~~ on its being pressed down or fixed in the notch raises all the C's a semitone — & so on

The common Harp is tuned in E flat: the pedals being

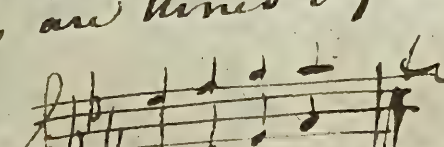
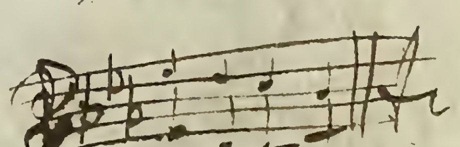
the pitch of note is taken from the Tuning fork —

unisson 

or 



Proof

The other notes are tuned by octaves, above & below those already tuned  

NB — here give a plan of the keys in which the single Harp can play.

To render the Harp capable of producing a fine tone it must be mounted with strings of a proper size — Thin strings are very prejudicial to a fine tone — The ~~strings~~ thickness of the strings should be adapted to the strength of the hand — a powerful hand requiring a greater resistance than one of less strength — The gauge used by Erard is the one best adapted to the generality of players

All the exercises — rules of fingering &c &c ~~are also applicable~~ to be given for the Double Harp are applicable for the single, the pupil has only to play the C instead of C♭ —

Refer to the plates at the end of the Chapter

tone than the ones ~~we partake quantity~~

~~the quality of the gut~~ NB perhaps it would be good to combine this Chapter and the following ~~on~~ in one —

Chap —

The Position[2] of the hands and manner[1] of sitting —

2, ~~A proper position of the hand is most essential as the quality of tone — and the facility of fingering depend entirely on this particular —~~ of sitting and placing the hands

1, ~~The performer~~ The Student must be seated ~~sideways~~ ~~so that the chin may be on a level with the neck of the Harp~~ the Harp ~~resting a little~~ inclined towards the body of the performer, resting on the right Knee and slightly on the Right Shoulder — the height of the seat must be so adapted that the ~~mouth~~ chin of the performer ~~it~~ may be on a level with the neck of of the Harp — see plate No 3 —

The feet must be placed on each side of the pedestal, so that they may with ease be placed on the pedals when required

They author recommends that the Body be kept quite steady as in performing the most difficult passages, it facilitates the motion of the feet — and renders the execution more sure.

NB 1 The author has in the course of his teaching heard many remarks made by Ladies ~~of the ways~~ that the study of the Harp, has had influence on the form of young ~~the~~ Students — this appears to be a very erroneous idea — as the Harpist if properly seated makes no movement that can in any way influence the growth or form of the body — The Harp being drawn backward so that it rests on the hind feet of the pedestal is always in a perfect equilibrium and ~~resting~~ ~~was~~ as ~~it~~ body of the Harp ought to rest on the right Knee the weight on the right Shoulder is quite imperceptible, and the Body of the Performer is as straight as if he were sitting as usual —

2, Several eminent Physicians on the continent consider the ~~exercising~~ of the Harp to be beneficial to the health — as it strengthens the Muscles and &c &c

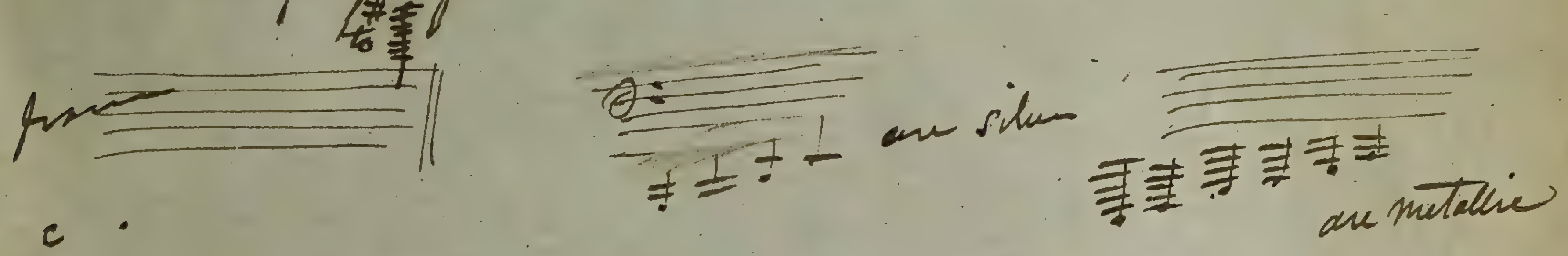
3- The Author could mention Ladies who have most diligently studied the Harp, who are known to be the most beautiful and perfect in shape, and ~~who~~ who to their natural ... the advantage of playing,

this most poetical and beautiful Instrument —
2, the proper position of the hands is most essential — as the quality of tone, and the facility of fingering depend entirely on this particular — as a printed form will convey the position better than words the author gives the good & bad — 5
The right ~~hand~~ arm above the wrist must rest on the body of the Harp — here plate: —

Compass in the Double movement Harp

~~Harp — on fingering~~

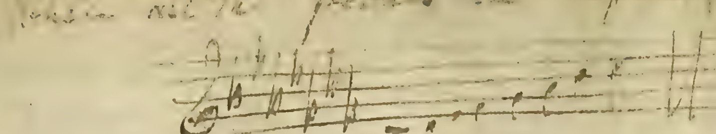
The compass of the Double movement Harp is 6 1/2 octaves



7 ~~[illegible]~~ there are 7 Pedals as on the single — but on the Double the pedals can be pressed down twice, so that the note can be raised two successive semitones · viz: [illegible] 12 [illegible]
so that the Harpist can perform in every Key — from ♭ ♮ ♯
1, The double Harp is tuned in C♭ the pedals being unfixed.

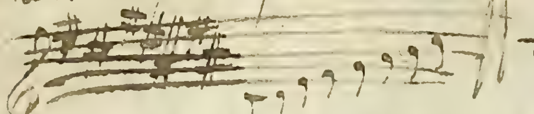
the other notes are tuned in octaves as on the single ——
3 the immense resources in the Double movement Harp in comparison with the single will be evident to the Student; ~~[illegible] Double movement~~ ~~[illegible] Pedals~~ The pedals are placed in the following order — the 3 pedals on the left correspond to the B's, C's — and D's — on the right to the E's, F's — G's and A's — The Pedals are to ~~[illegible]~~ be pressed with the extremity of the foot when a sharp or natural is ~~required~~ introduced — during the course of a piece [illegible] modulations are [illegible] introduced, — and when it [illegible] some time the [illegible] [illegible] the Student [illegible] be placed in the [illegible] made [illegible]

when all the "pedals are" in [illegible] ... [illegible]



when all the pedals are ~~all~~ placed in the 1st notch the Harp is in C♮ Major

when all the pedals are placed in the 2nd notch the Harp is C# Major



✠ As the fingering on the Harp is the same in all keys, the Author has written the exercises in C Major so that they may be equally adapted to both Harps — The fingering with the left hand is (with some few exceptions) the same as with the right —

✠ also in this chapter

On fingering — NB this can be introduced in the Chapter on the scales —

Previous to beginning the exercises it will be necessary to make some remarks on fingering — By fingering is understood the Art of placing the fingers of both hands in such a manner ~~as to enable the Student to~~ ~~perform any Passage with the great~~ as to ~~give the Student the greatest possible~~ ~~~~ facilitate the execution of the passage

There may be several ways of fingering a passage — but the student must select that, which gives the greatest rapidity and neatness —

The Author has in many instances deviated from the fingering in general use being convinced by experience that the Student will obtain much more independance in the different fingers —

The thumb is indicated by the figure 1 — the other fingers by the figures 2, 3, 4 — and when the little finger is necessary it will be indicated by 5 — ✠

The little finger being ~~found~~ too short is rarely ~~introduced~~ used on the Harp — and that only in certain cases with the left hand —

The great defect in the fingering on the Harp as yet — has been the neglect of the ~~2nd third and~~ fourth 3rd fingers, as by the fingering generally used the thumb and ~~2nd~~ 1st fingers are more used ~~and~~ exercised than the others so that ~~the~~ Harpists in general, have, in consequence, never been able to depass a certain boundary of execution — in fact it is nothing more than if they had only 2 fingers to make use of instead of 4 — As the Author will accompany each series of exercises with remarks and fingering — he deems it unnecessary to give any general rules of fingering — as ~~there~~ must be of necessity more exceptions than rules — and as example is better than precept — he flatters himself that the pupil after having attentively studied the exercises and the remarks of the Author will experience no difficulty in selecting the fingering most adapted to every passage that may occur in [illegible]

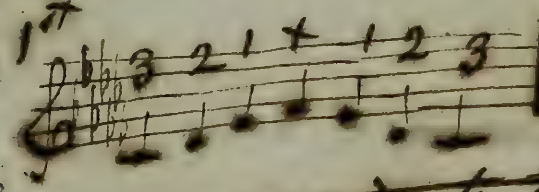
✠ N.B. [illegible] the Music the thumb is marked with a cross [illegible]

~~The scales being ... are essential~~

To acquire a perfect and finished execution on the Harp, a continued and persevering practice of the Scales is ~~most~~ indispensable. This vital and essential study (or exercise) has always been treated in a very superficial manner, and the consequence is ~~that the pianists who have acquired a certain degree of execution~~ ~~that the great majority of Harpists~~ that the fingers not having been rendered sufficiently independent, a great number of passages cannot be rendered with ~~the~~ equality of tone that is so necessary to a finished execution. The Author trusts the exercises he proposes will in a great measure remove this deficiency.

The Scales must, in the first place, be practised very slowly, taking care to strike each note distinctly and with the same degree of force — in order to acquire an equality of tone — The pupil will begin his exercises by the following ~~exercise~~

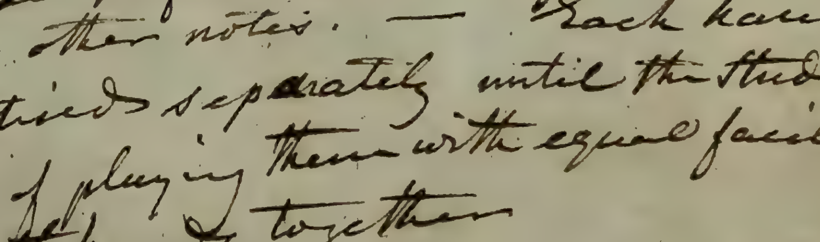
Ex: 1st



~~Having after which he will proceed to the scales taking care & in ascending~~

In practising the Scales the Student must, in ascending, pay great attention in the passing the 3rd finger under thumb and in descending in passing the thumb over the 3rd finger, in order that ~~the~~ it may not be heard where the hand is changed, so that the four first notes being played the fingers may be placed at once on the four next strings ready to play the four other notes. — Each hand must be practised separately until the Student be certain of playing them with equal facility and then both hands together

Ex 2nd



NB the slur indicates where the finger is to be prepared

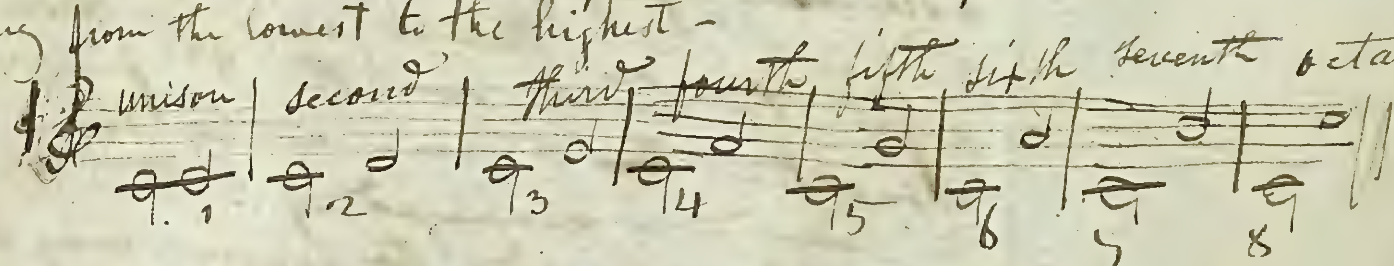
Having sufficiently ~~practised~~ this exercise with both hands the pupil will proceed to the following exercises

All the exercises the pupil must practise each separately, then both together

Chap ——

On Intervals

An Interval is the distance from one note of the scale to another proceeding from the lowest to the highest -



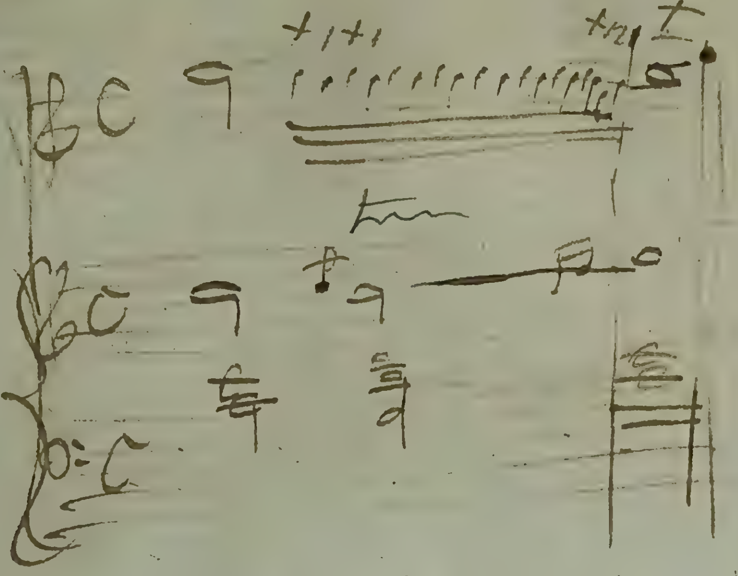
see Piano Method

Intervals are expressed by figures which indicate the number of degrees contained in the interval

Graces

The Shake is a Grace, effected by a rapid alternation of the principle note and that immediately above it. The shake to be good, must not only be quick but distinct, and performed without any motion of the arm, or of the wrist.

Manner of playing it.



Chap: de cancro

Slides (Sdrucciolando)

The slides are scales in 3rds 6ths & octaves – ascending or descending – they form a great feature in Harp music – in fact some of the greatest effects of the Harp are produced by them – especially when, by means of the pedals, the ~~different~~ accords ~~[illegible]~~ of the diminished 7ths, &c. are the performer plays ~~the~~ the common scale (see Chapter on double pedals)

Examples

On the Pedals

A proper management of the Pedals is of the greatest importance as it is by means of them that all modulations are introduced —

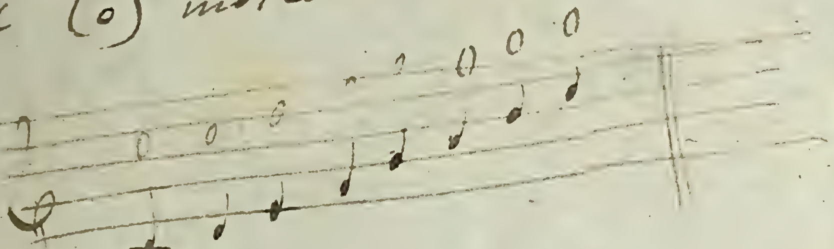
NB
write a long
Chapter on the
way of exercising
the Pedals and
also the effects pro=
duced by them viz:
[illegible] # — and double pedals
with diminishing [illegible] —
Synonymous &c &c

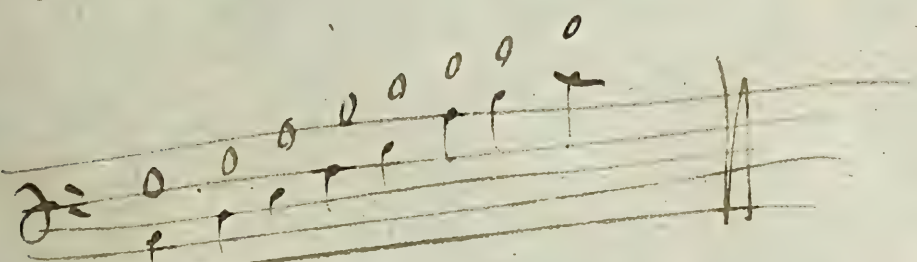
The Term Harmonic is applied to those sounds which on the Harps are produced by pressing the fleshy part of the hand lightly, or the edge of the palm of the hand, on the middle of the strings, striking them at the same time with the fingers, which are kept in a position nearly vertical, and rather leaning on the strings —

Harmonic sounds being very sweet and calculated to produce great effects, the Scholar must study attentively to produce them with facility and certainty. no other direction besides what has just been mentioned can be given towards producing them, practice alone giving the Student facility & ease in that respect.—

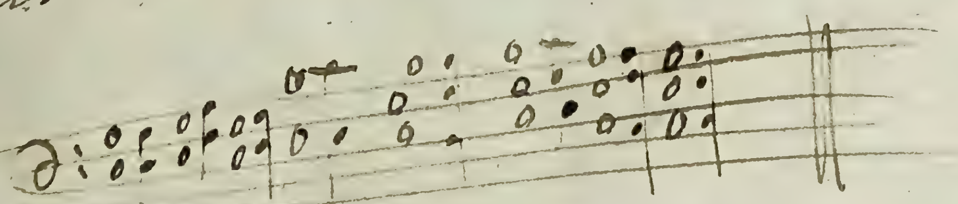
With the right hand they are produced by pressing the side of the first joint of the fore finger against the middle of the string, striking at the same time the string with the thumb —

This mark (o) indicates when the notes are to be play'd in Harmonics

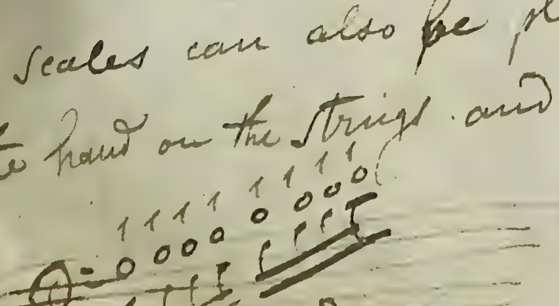




With the left hand one can produce two or three harmonics at the same time



The scales can also be play'd rapidly by placing the under part of the hand on the strings and sliding with the first finger on the strings



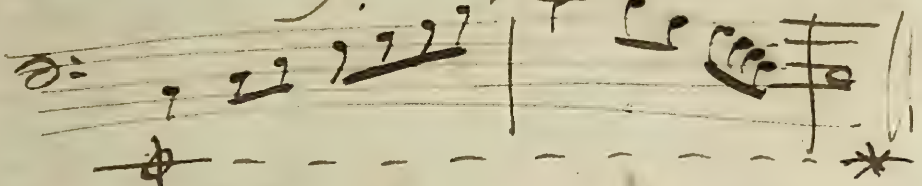
Chap — Sons Etouffés

64

The sons etouffes are produced by immediately replacing the hand or fingers on the strings struck in order to stop their vibration — The sons etouffé's can be produced by the right as well as the left hand —

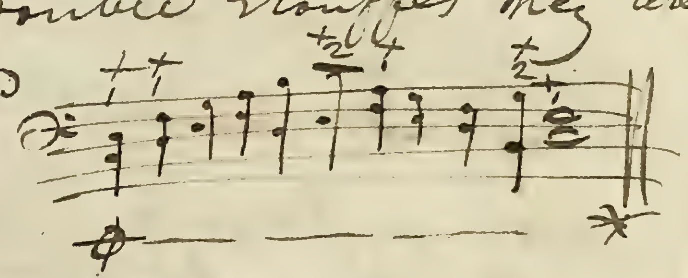
To produce a firm Tone and to perform a succession of notes with rapidity the left hand must be stretched out the fingers held close together, ~~so that they may not enter between the~~ and their extremities ~~of the fingers~~ must rest firmly on the strings, in order that the note struck by the thumb may be immediately damped by the Palm of the hand.

Ex 1.



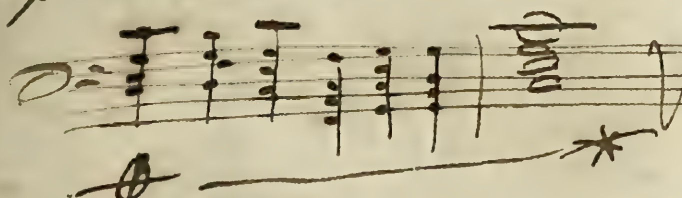
NB. The sons etouffé's are indicated thus ⊕ - - - * the Star marks when they cease

In playing double Etouffé's they are fingered as in Ex 2 —



When an accord or a succession of accords are to be play'd etouffé's the accord must be play'd first and the hand immediately placed on the notes struck in the accord —

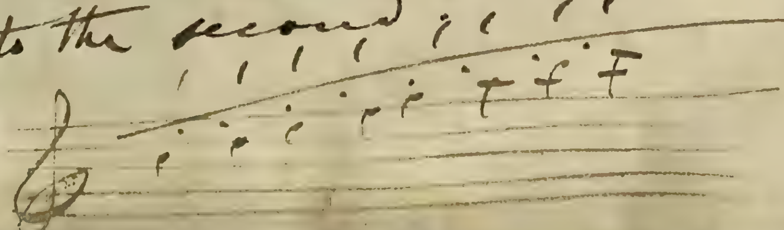
Ex. 3.



~~The produced~~ The accords etouffé's are very effective in imitating the drums in ~~military~~ Martial music —

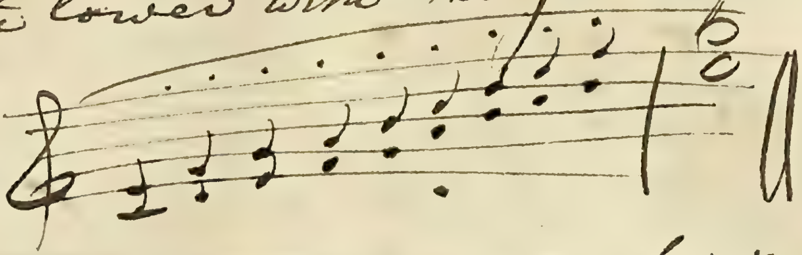
In playing a succession of single notes in etouffé's with the right hand the first joint of the first finger must be bent so as to fill the space between two strings — thus in ascending the first note struck is damped by placing the joint on it in ascending to the second

Ex. 4



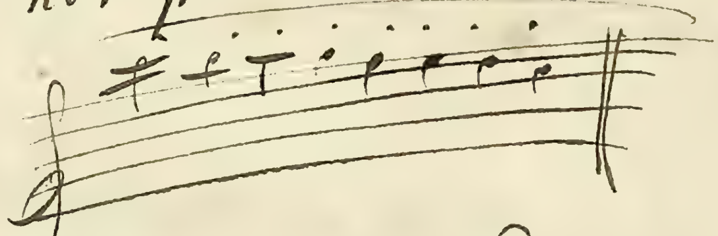
It may be here remarked that in Harp Music all notes dotted with a slur over them are play'd by the first finger and etouffés ——

— Thirds may also be play'd in the same manner by damping the lower with the joint of the second finger

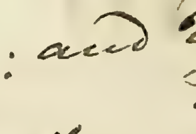
Ex: No 5. 

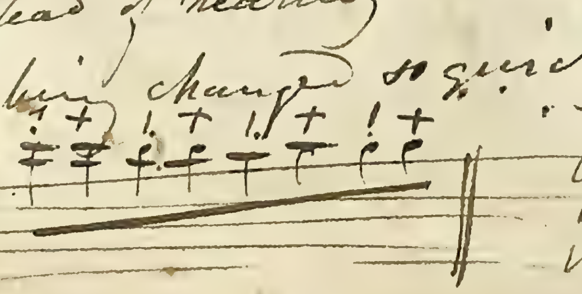
Thirds with the left hand may also be produced in the same manner ——

In descending with the right hand the note is struck with the thumb and immediately damped by placing the side of the thumb near the first joint on the note struck — in order not to impede the action of the thumb the fingers must be extended but not placed on the strings

Ex: 6. 

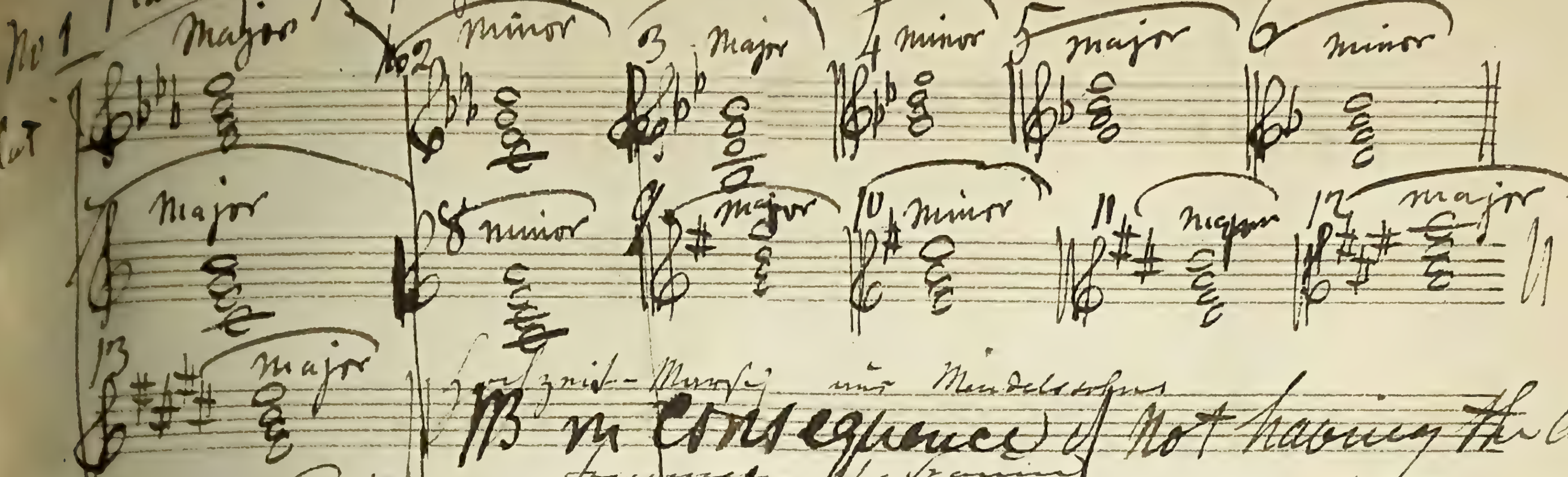
Thirds cannot be play'd —

Some performers in playing the Etouffés descending with the right hand strike the note with the first finger and damp it by placing the thumb immediately on the string — this is vicious for 2 reasons 1st) It is impossible (notwithstanding the shortness of the string) to avoid a hissing jarring sound: and 2nd) in a rapid execution instead of hearing the notes thus  they thumb by being changed so quickly produces the following effect



quite contrary to the effect intended ——

Plan of Keys of single Harp —



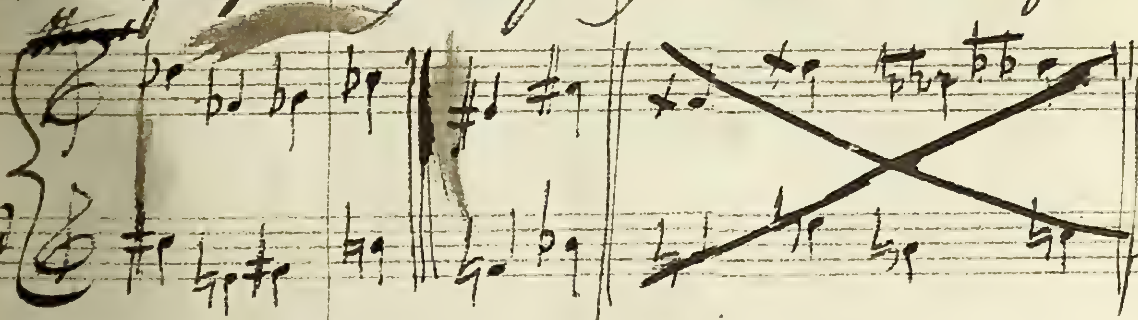
Hochzeit-Marsch von Mendelssohn

B in consequence of not having the A #, E #, and B # ~~the~~ minor keys of ~~D~~ ~~G~~ and E are inconvenient, as it is necessary to take the ~~borrowed notes or~~ synonymes ~~of which we shall speak in a particular Chapter, then the other keys will be found the most advantageous for the Harp~~ ~~single movement Harp~~.

~~As~~ The single movement Harp is confined to such a small number of Keys that it is frequently necessary to make use of the synonymes —

Notes written

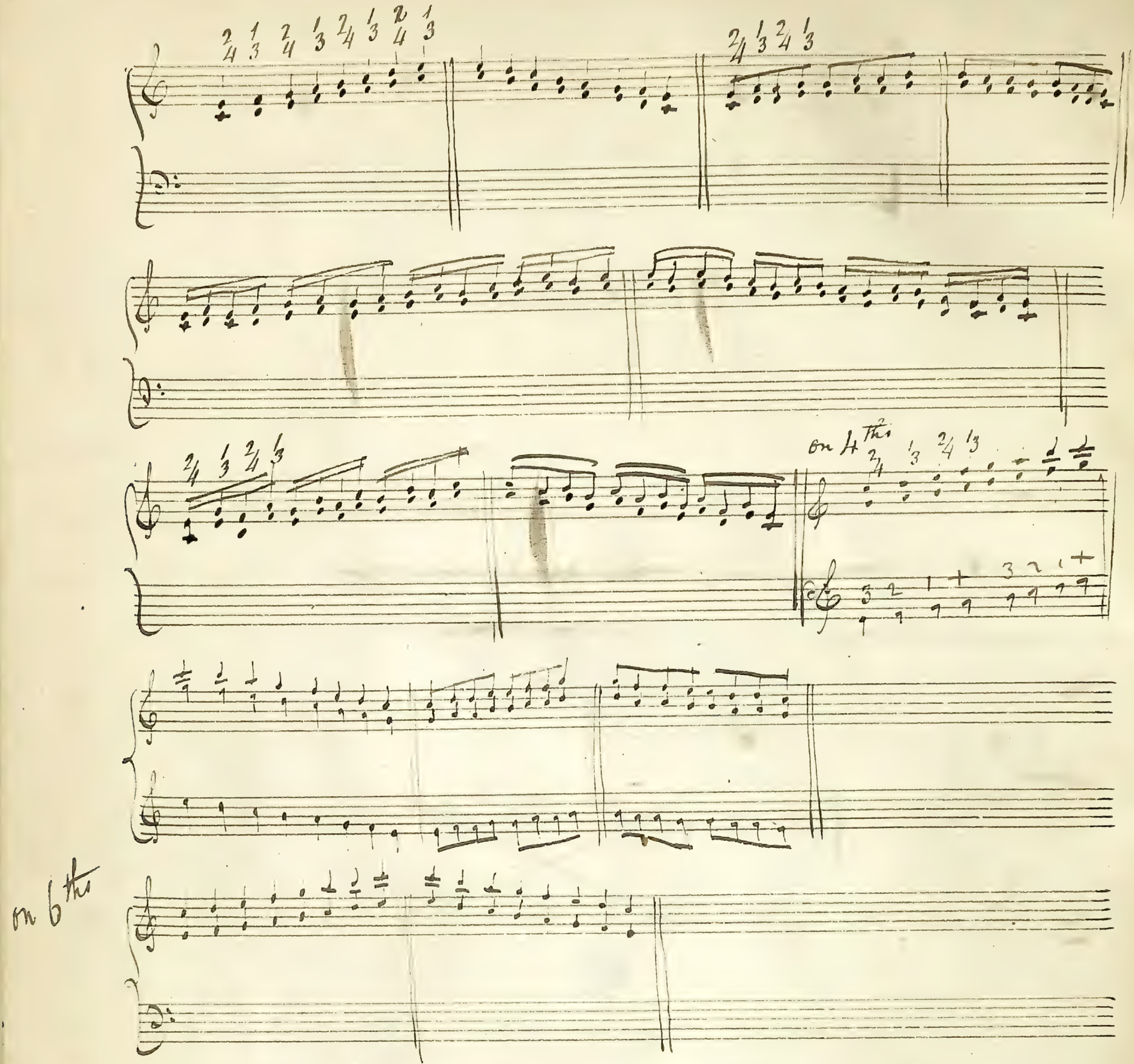
must be play'd

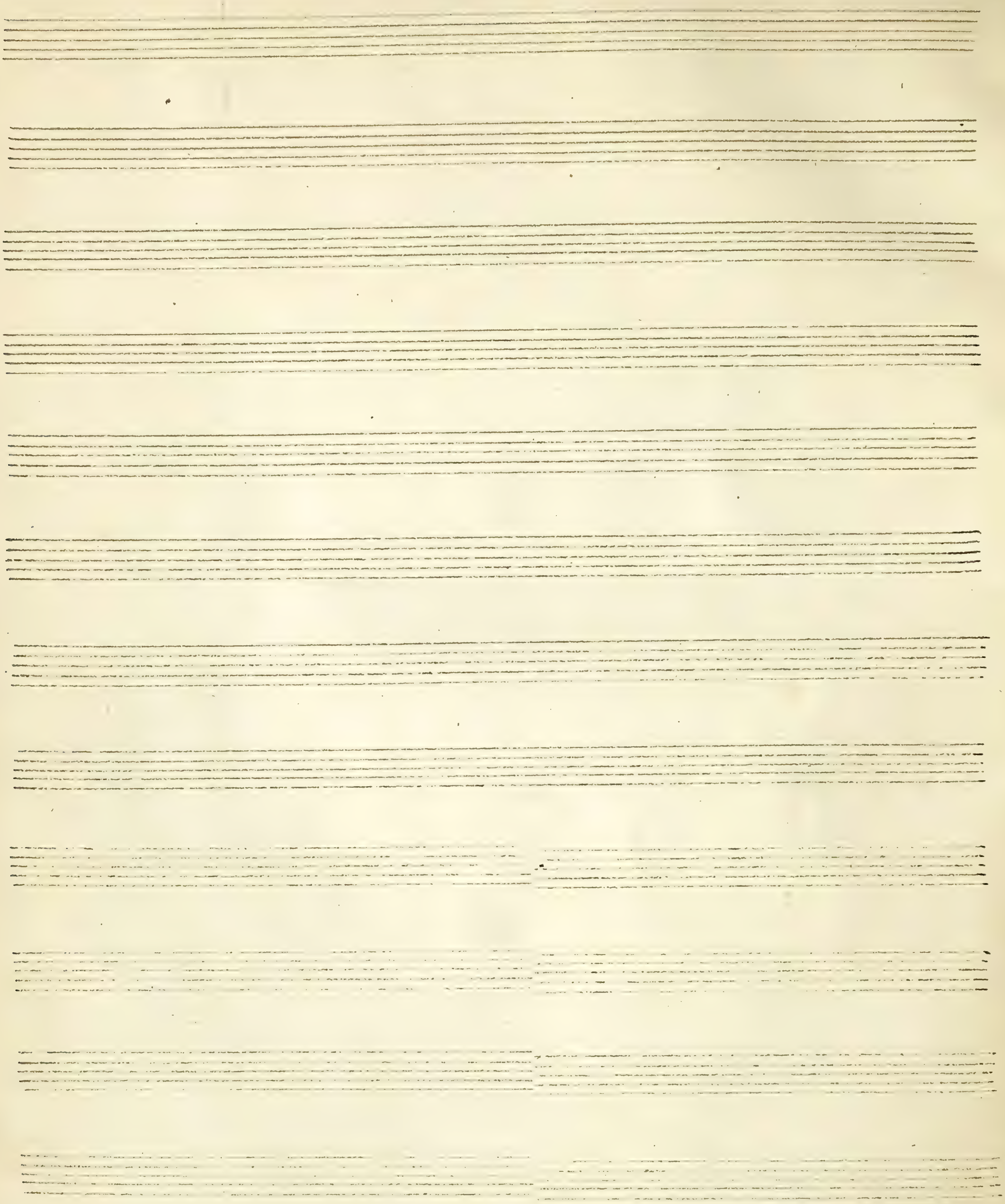


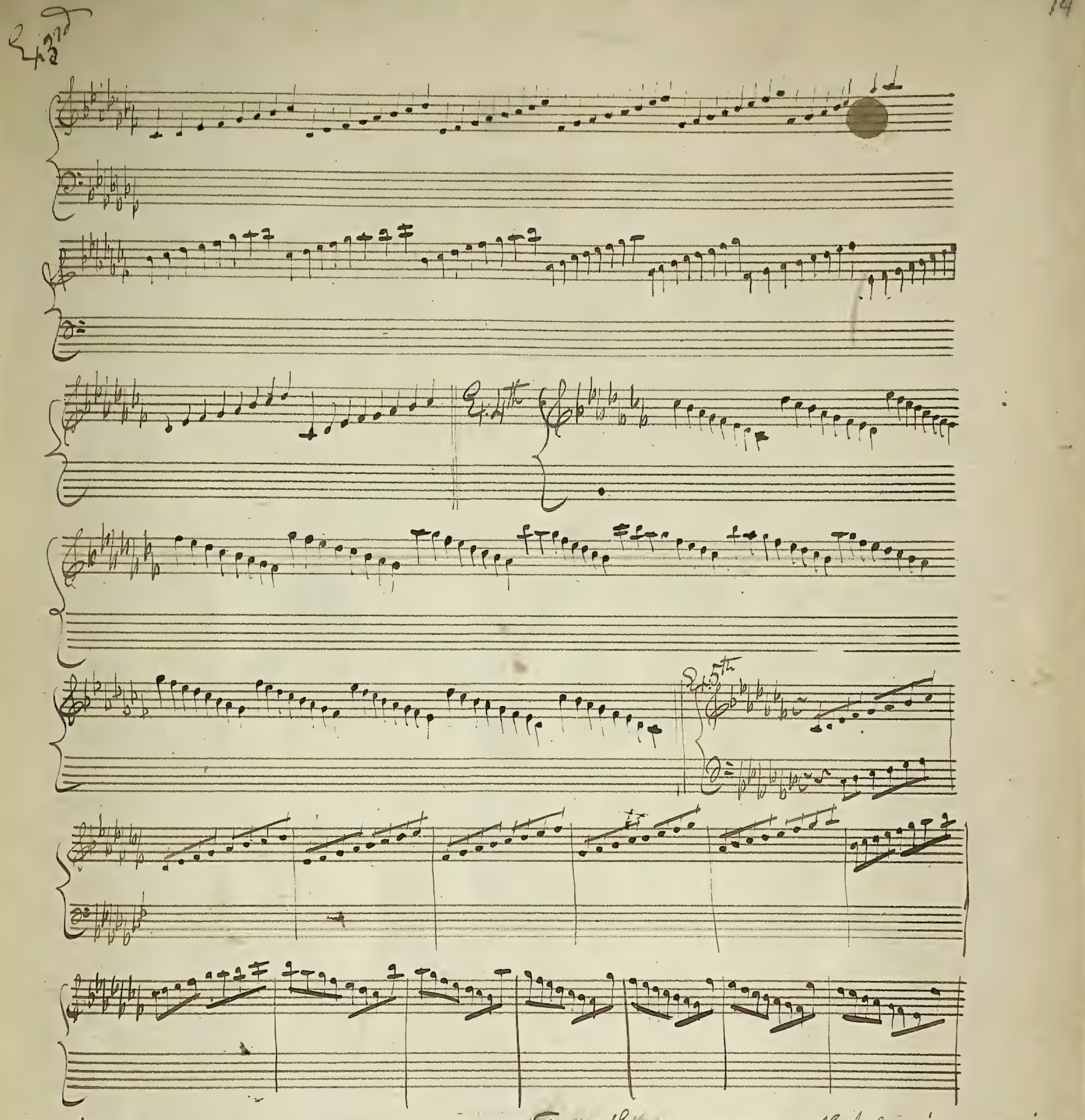
~~This occurs in~~ great inconvenience as it hinders the rapidity of execution —

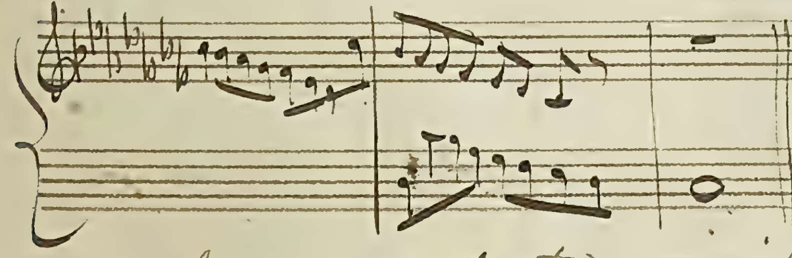
This can only be introduced in slow movements as the necessity of striking the same string twice and the quick action of the pedal renders it unequal — The composer in writing for the single movement Harp will do well to avoid the necessity of taking these notes — and the Harpist ~~will~~ had better select pieces written in Keys in which they are not necessary —

B. on Intervals play'd together — on thirds



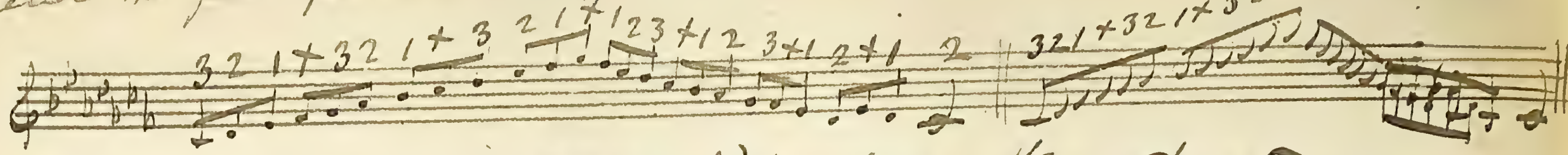






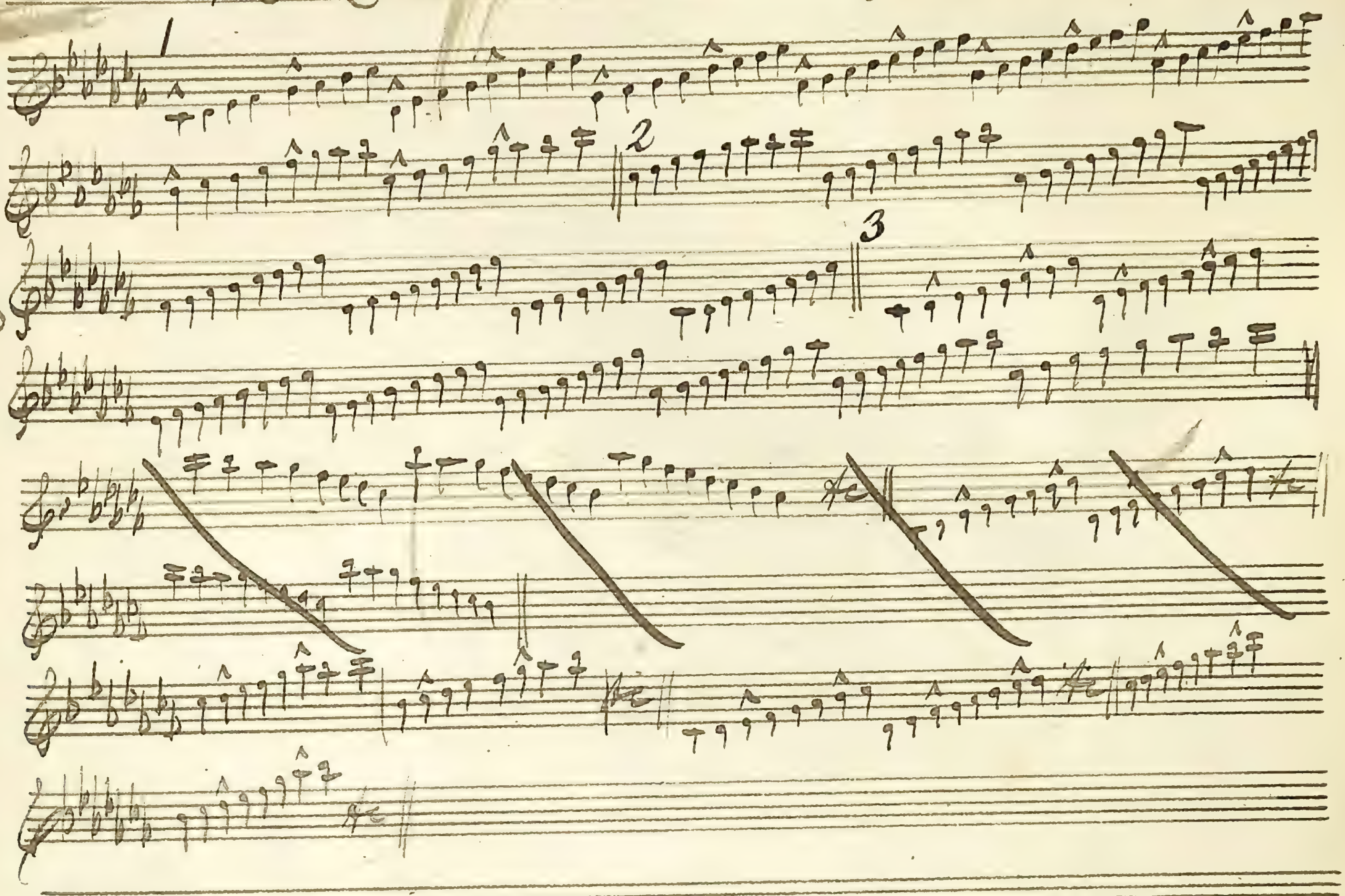
The Author now proposes the following exercises ~~in order~~ to render each finger independent in order that the student may be able to execute any given note with any given finger for instance if the student wishes to play Triolets or sextolets, he will find it impossible to do without having previously run through the ~~exercises~~ preparatory exercises

To play the following passages in Triolets & Sestolets it is evidently necessary to accent the first notes of each Triplet and of each Sestolet —

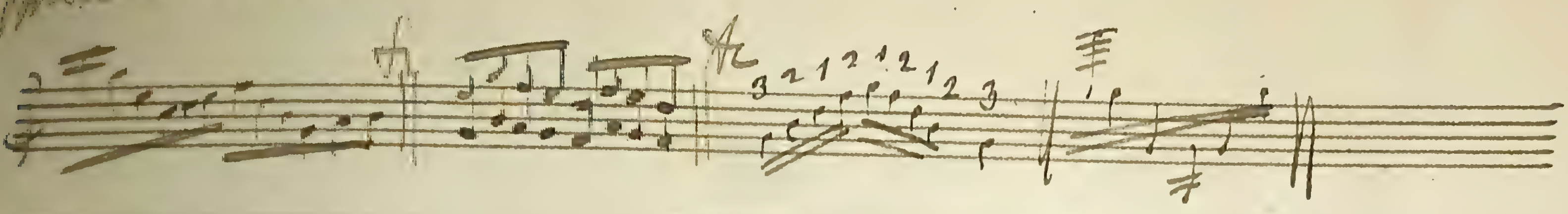


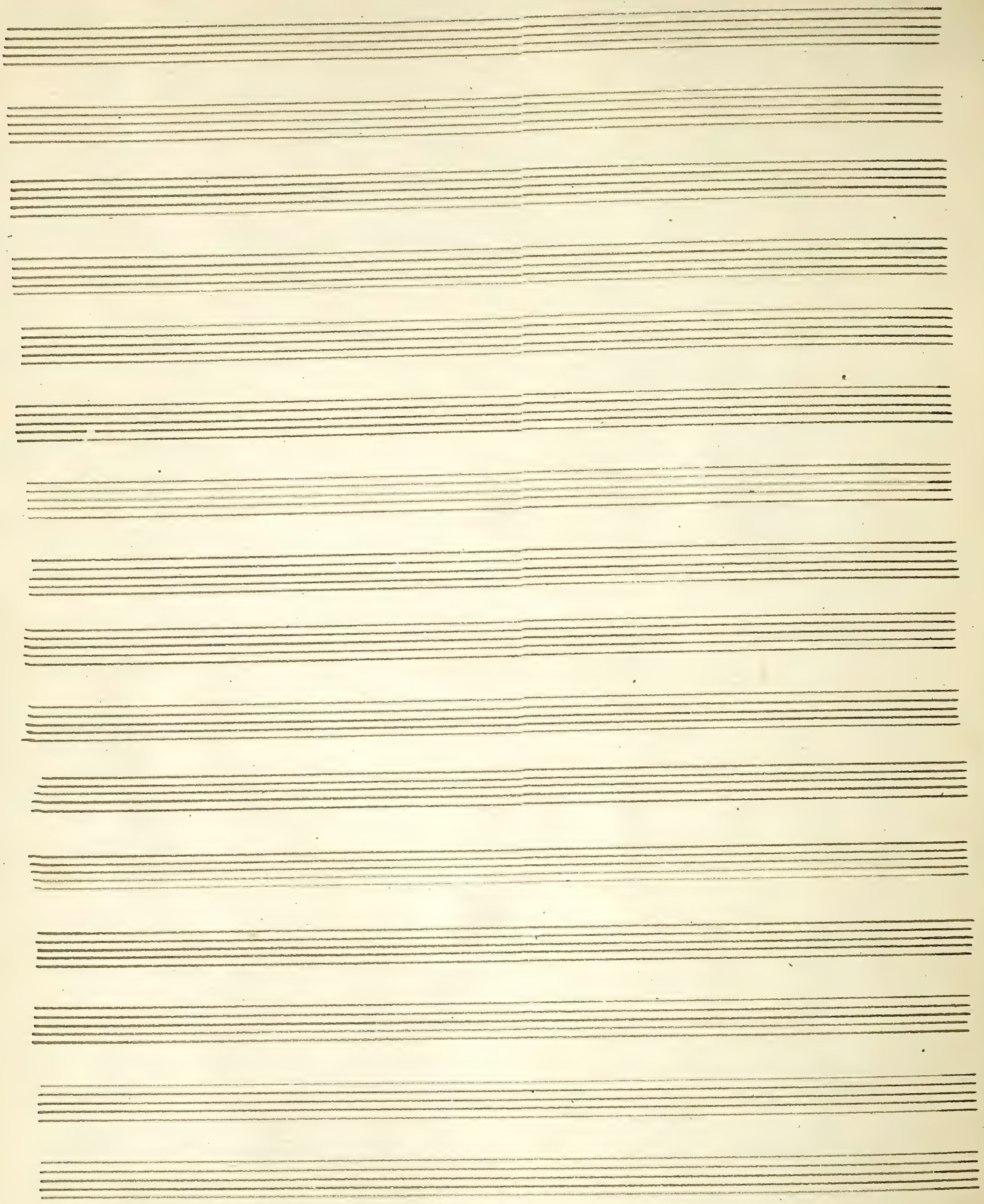
~~as the same fingering is employ'd in playing these passages~~

The notes on which the ∧ is placed is to be strongly accented

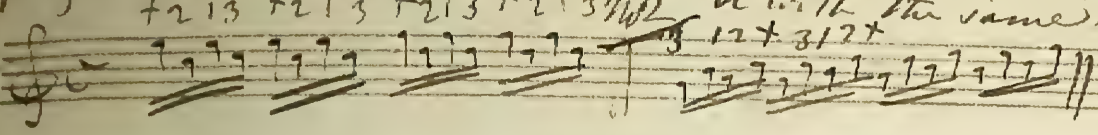


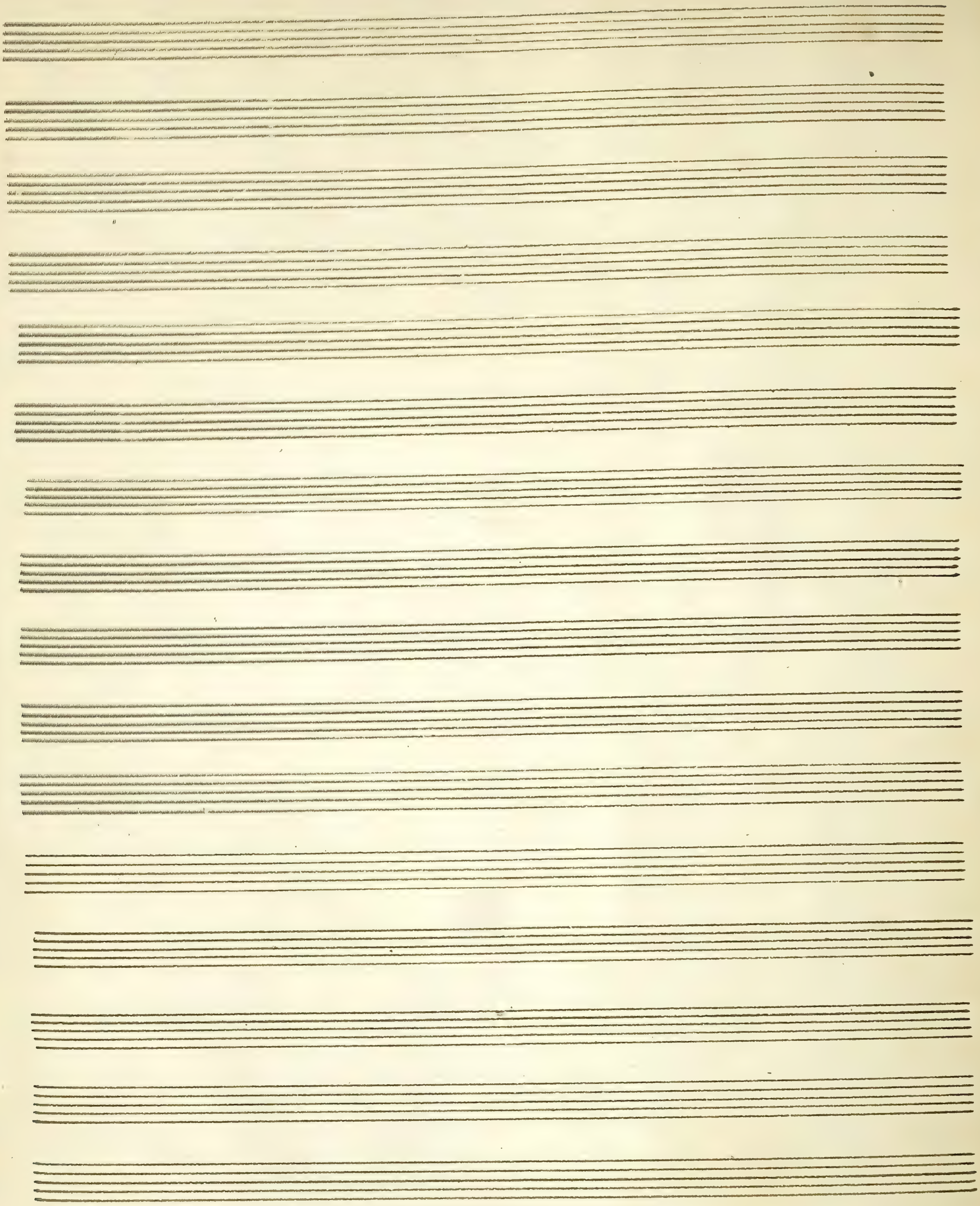
Miscellaneous Exercises

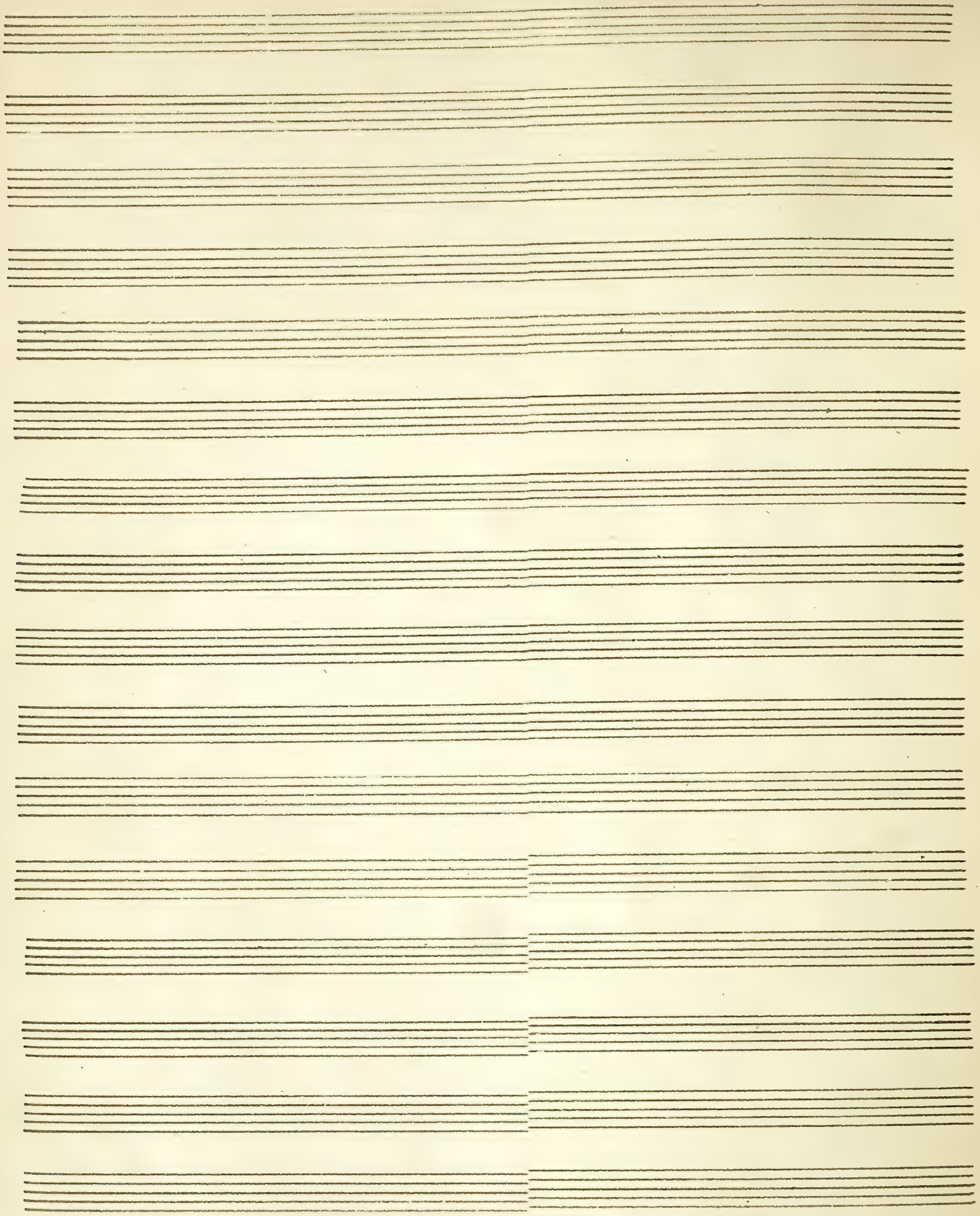




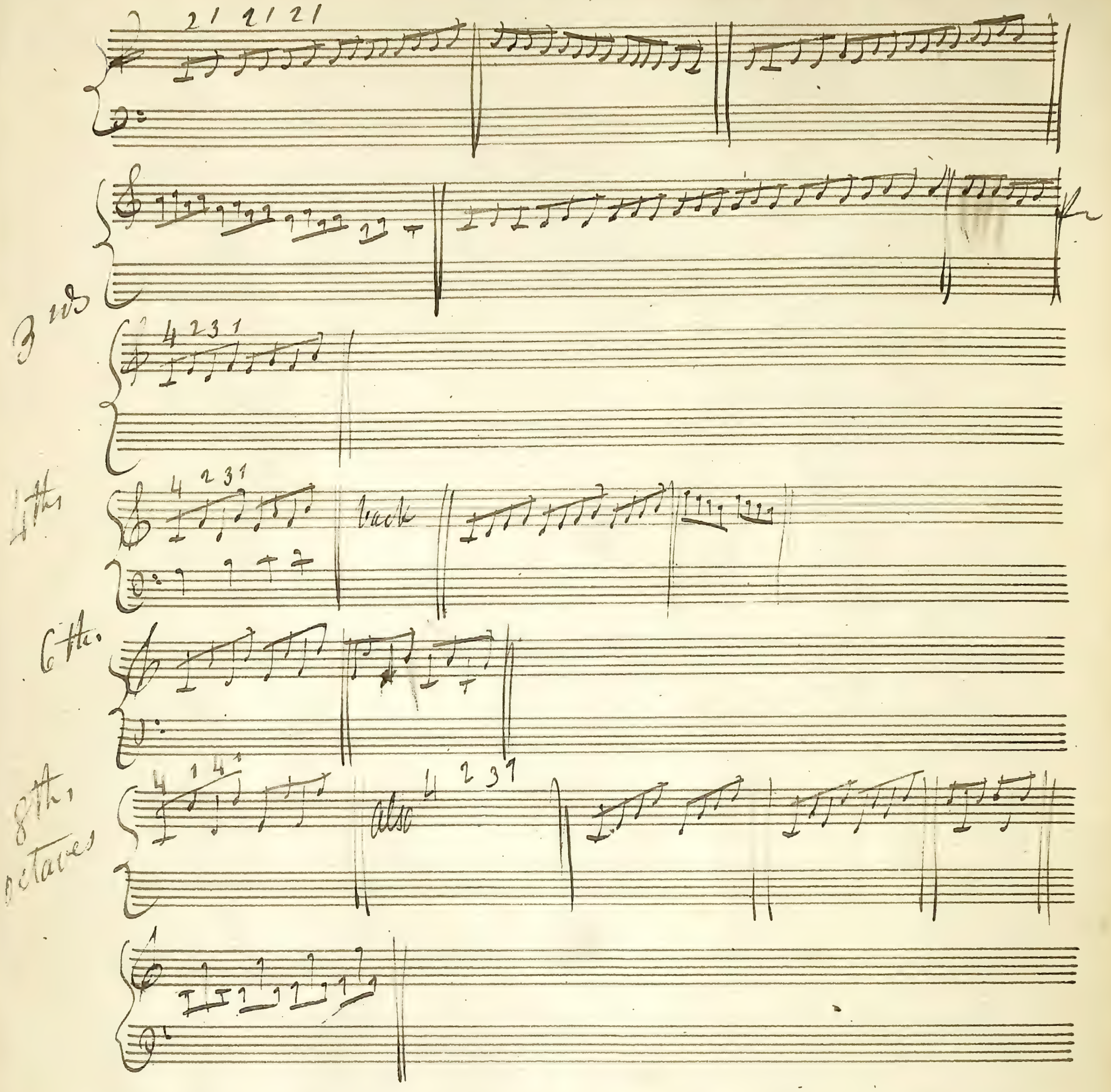
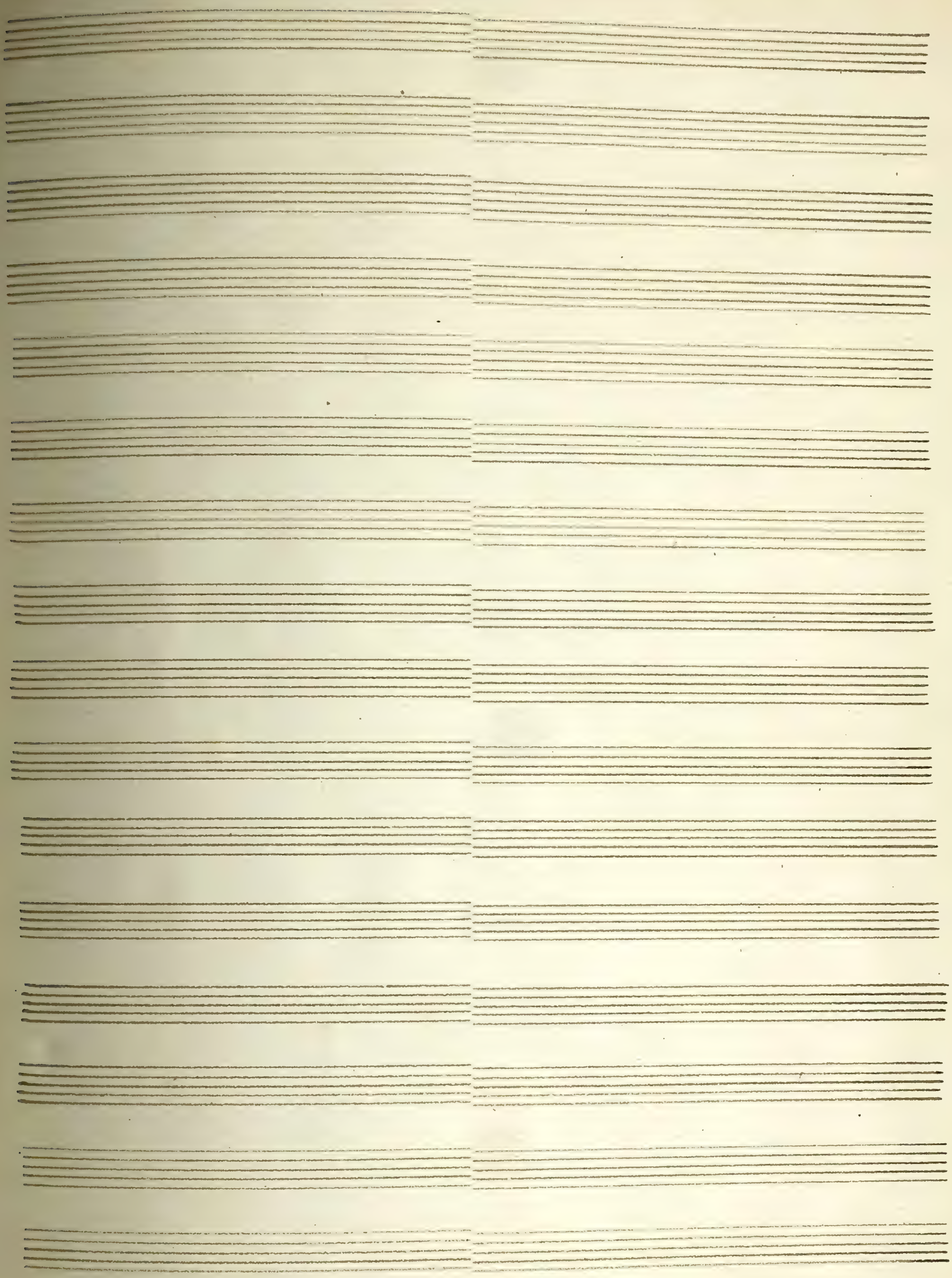
In the following passage No 1 it is impossible to produce the same effect by any other fingering ~~that~~ than that indicated; also in No 2, it is not possible to ~~produce~~ play it with the same rapidity and neatness, much less to produce ~~the peculiar~~ legato & peculiar effect inherent in fingering marked ——

No 1






Exercise on Intervals

on seconds /

NB Mix these exercises with others – and invert the order